

15 Classic Books on 'Becoming American' Will Support Community Programs

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BAKERSFIELD, CA - Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) announced today that 15 classic books on the theme of 'Becoming American' has been awarded to Kern County Library Lamont Branch. This award was made possible through the National Endowment for the Humanities' (NEH) *We the People* Bookshelf program.

'The Lamont Library will not only receive a set of 15 books but will also be given posters and bookmarks honoring the 'Becoming American' theme,' said Costa. These materials will come from the American Library Association, an organization that is working in partnership with the Endowment. The bookshelf program is part of the NEH's *We the People* initiative, which supports projects that strengthen the teaching, study and understanding of American history and culture.

'These books emphasize the immigrant character of the nation and will give the community an opportunity to explore America's diverse population,' explained Costa. 'The United States is a nation of immigrants. Nearly every family in this country has an immigration story in their ancestral, or more recent, past so it is not surprising that American literature reflects this and asks the question of what it is to become an American. This program provides a great opportunity for the community to discuss American history and literature as well as encouraging families to research their own immigrant past.'

The *We the People* Bookshelf on 'Becoming American' contains the following books:

Kindergarten to Grade 3

- *The Lotus Seed* by Sherry Garland
- *Watch the Stars Come Out* by Riki Levinson
- *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say

Grades 4 to 6

- *Immigrant Kids* by Russell Freedman
- *The People Could Fly: The Picture Book* by Virginia Hamilton
- *Rip Van Winkle* by Washington Irving
- *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord

Grades 7 to 8

- *Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith
- *The Glory Field* by Walter Dean Myers
- *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith
- *Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep

Grades 9 to 12

- *Death Comes for the Archbishop* by Willa Cather
- *Barrio Boy* by Ernesto Galarza
- *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, edited by Louis P. Masur
- *Giants in the Earth: A Saga of the Prairie* by Ole Edvart Rølvaag